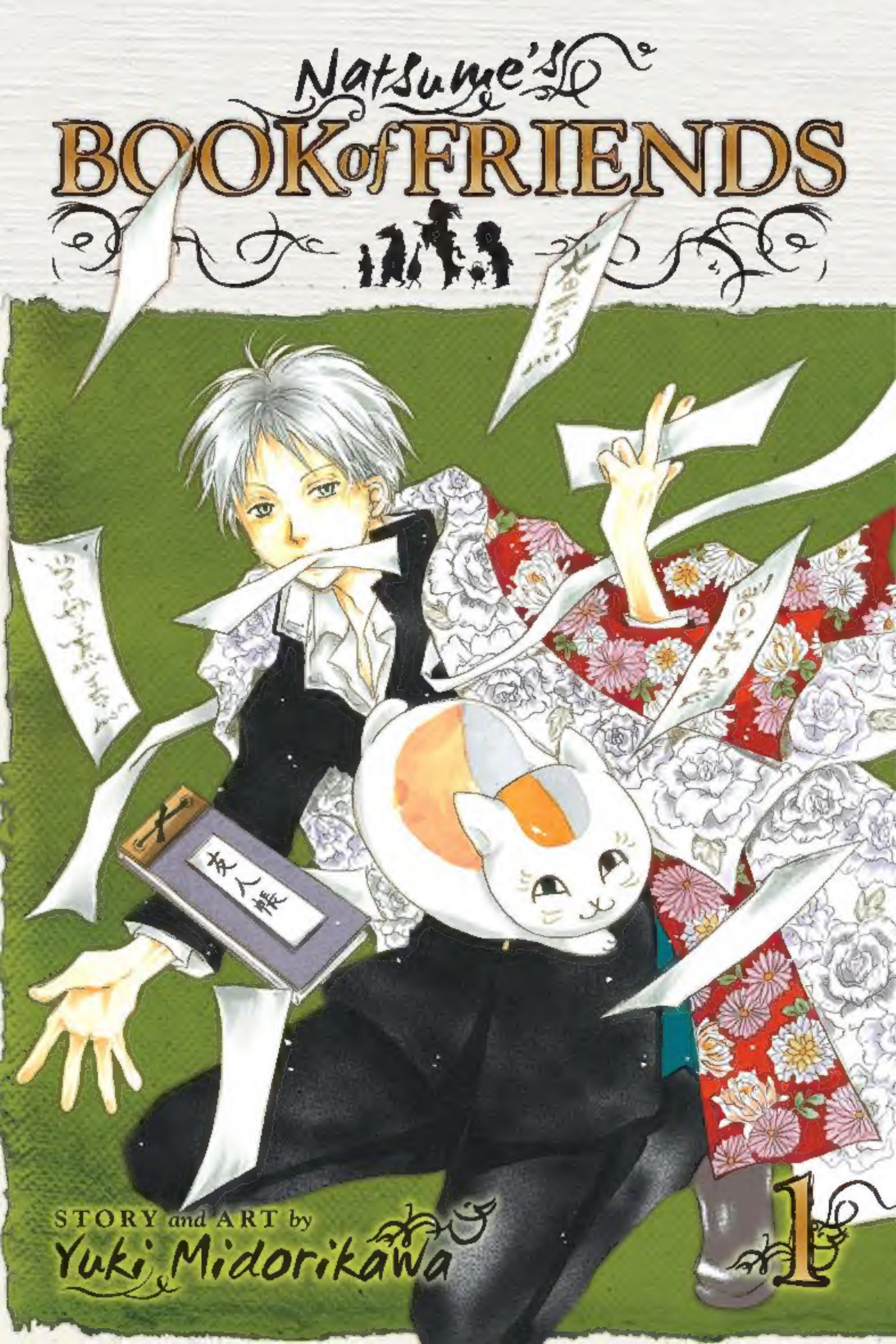
Natsume's BOOK of FRIENDS



STORY and ART by

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Natsume's
BOOK of FRIENDS

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BOOGIE WOOGIE SOUL

CHAPTER 1

WHERE DID SHE GO?

WHERE IS SHE?

SHF

HSSH

SHF

SHF

SHF

SHF

HSSH

SHF

SHF

SHF

IT'S SO HOT!

twap

twap

FSS

!

TH

HEY ...

.....

NATSUME? IS THAT YOU?

OH, THE TRANSFER STUDENT IN YOUR CLASS?

"NATSU-ME"?

WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING?

hff

WHAT DO YOU THINK ...?

hff

BY THE WAY, IS THERE A SHRINE NEARBY?

YEAH ...

YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY?

OH... NEVER MIND.

pat

pat

DASH

HUH? NATSU-ME!

THANKS!

Bye

I THINK THROUGH THAT THICKET...

HUH ...?

IT'S LIKE HE'S BEING CHASED...

FSSH HSSH FSSH FSSH FSSH FSSH

HE SEEMS NICE, BUT HE'S DISTANT.

I WONDER WHY HE'S IN SUCH A HURRY?

HIS PARENTS DIED AFTER HE WAS BORN, SO HE GREW UP GETTING SHUFFLED AROUND BETWEEN RELATIVES.

... WEIRDO ...

WHOO

SHIT

!

WH—

WHOA ?!

SHIT

.....

WHAT'S WITH THAT SUDDEN GUST...?

hff

hff

hff

hff

hff

hff

WHAT AM I DOING?

THEY'RE LUCKY THEY CAN'T SEE THIS...

SINCE I WAS LITTLE, I'VE SEEN WEIRD THINGS.

THEY'RE CREATURES CALLED YOKAI.

THEY USUALLY GIVE UP THE CHASE WHEN I SEEK REFUGE IN A SHRINE...

...THESE DAYS THEY'VE BEEN GIVING ME A LOT MORE TROUBLE THAN BEFORE.

IT WASN'T EVER PLEASANT, BUT...

NOT AGAIN... WHAT IS IT THIS TIME?

FFT

HFF

HFF

H

SHA

SHU

koff

UNH...

WHA
—?

WAIT.

REIKO
...?

IT

BACK!

kr
k

...?!

GIVE

AH.

GOT
YOU.

GOT
YOU.

FINALLY,
REIKO.

kick

?!

ow...

LET'S PULL OUT HER TONGUE FIRST SO SHE CAN'T SAY OUR NAMES.

HOLD ON.

BASH

THAT HURTS!

hff

hff

PAIN

hff

PAIN

hff

UNH ...

IT HURTS.

SHF

I DON'T SEE THEM BECAUSE I WANT TO.

WHY DOES THIS HAPPEN TO ME?

WHAT'S GOING ON?

WE ONLY NEED THREE PLACE SETTINGS, TAKASHI.

HUH? WHAT ABOUT YOUR GUEST...?

THAT'S WHY HE'S MAKING THESE STORIES UP.

HE MUST BE LONELY.

HE GIVES ME THE CREEPS...

WHAT?

HE'S DOING IT TO GET ATTENTION.

WE DON'T SEE ANYTHING.

I'M SORRY, TAKASHI.

WE DON'T UNDER-STAND.

tu

ff

ff

ff

!

THUD

OW!

ip

AH...

URK

hff

I—

I BROKE A ROPE.

b-bmp

hff

ff

ff

b-bmp

b-bmp

hff

THE KEKKAI IS BROKEN ...

WELL DONE, WHELP.

TNK

I CAN GO OUT-SIDE!

AT LONG LAST...

TNK

TNK

fmp

UH-OH...

IT MIGHT'VE BEEN IMPRISONING SOMETHING DANGER-OUS!

SLAM

Uh...

...

PLP

YOU REMAIN UNPERTURBED BY THE SIGHT OF ME, IMPUDENT HUMAN?

PLP

.....

I'M USED TO IT...

pit pat

HMM?

PRETTY MUCH. BUT DON'T LUMP ME IN WITH THOSE MEDIOCRE, SECOND-RATE...

ARE YOU A YOKAI TOO?

DO

ON

!

REIKO
...

...

REIKO NATSUME IS MY GRAND-MOTHER'S NAME...

YOU...

YOU'RE REIKO NATSUME ...

WHAT ?

GRAND-MOTHER ?!

YOU KNEW HER...?

buzz

buzz

buzz

OH...

SHE WAS ALWAYS BY HER-SELF.

buzz

buzz

buzz

...NOBODY COULD UNDER-STAND HER.

SHE USED TO LIVE AROUND HERE... SHE WAS A VERY BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

OH...

AND SHE COULD PERCEIVE THE SUPERNATURAL, LIKE YOU.

THAT'S WHY...

I DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF THIS.

SO SHE STARTED TO ABUSE YOKAI TO LET OFF STEAM.

SO.

bzz~

bzz~

SHE WAS ALWAYS ...

... ALONE.

BOOK...? WHAT...

SHH

URK

THE LINGERING EFFECTS OF THE KEKKAI WILL KEEP THE WEAK ONES AWAY.

ARE YOU BEING CHASED?

HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE BOOK OF FRIENDS?

REALLY...?

THAT WOULD HELP A—

GLK

?!

WHAT WAS THAT FOR..?

UNH ..

WHOO!

...

NOTHING GOOD EVER COMES FROM GETTING INVOLVED.

I LET MY GJARD DOWN.

STUPID CAT.

HOW WAS YOUR DAY, TAKASHI?

...

HE'S GONE Z!

MR. AND MRS. FUJIWARA TOOK ME IN RECENTLY. THEY'RE DISTANT RELATIVES ON MY FATHER'S SIDE.

IT'S FINE TO PLAY OUTSIDE, BUT TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!

HA HA

SOLLY

THEY'RE VERY KIND.

WHAT'S WRONG?! YOU LOOK PALE.

YOU SHOULD WEAR A HAT WHEN IT'S THIS HOT OUT!

I CAN NEVER TELL THEM THAT I SEE YOKAI..

I DON'T WANT THEM TO FREAK OUT...

KSH

KOFF

KOFF

FMP

IS THIS WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT?

HERE IT IS.

BOOK OF FRIENDS ...

FMP

KOFF

KOFF

FMP

FMP

flip

flip

友人帳

.....

I THOUGHT I SAW IT IN HER THINGS...

BOOK OF FRIENDS ...

TATSUEDA.

HIDAKA...

flip

KANOKA.

YUNURI.

flip

SINONOME.

KAIDORI.

HM?

flip

I CAN SEE THE LETTERS IN MY HEAD...

I-I CAN READ THIS...?

flip

THAT.

flip

flip

flip

IS IT A SKETCH-BOOK...?

flip

flip

JUST WE.RD DOODLES

...

...NOHA.

flip

flip

THAT'S THE BOOK OF FRIENDS !!

GIVE IT TO ME!

GRRR

HE FOLLOWED ME HOME!

!

THE KITTY FROM BEFORE!

NO

TAKASHI? WHAT WAS THAT SOUND?

OH NO!

THE DOOR ...!

FW

duck

WAH!

BOINK

YOU BRAT! HAND IT OVER...

Um.

NOTH-ING!

TUNK

WHO ARE YOU CALLING A KITTY CAT?!

I DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE. HAVE A SNACK AND LEAVE.

SHUT UP, YOU'RE JUST A KITTY CAT.

YOU'RE A FREE-LOADER HERE?

01

Hello, I'm Midorikawa. This is my ninth graphic novel and counting.

Only one more book until I reach the goal I had when I first started as a manga artist ten graphic novels to my name. A big thank you to everyone who picked it up, and to all my editors. I'll keep working hard every day to earn your support.

I came up with Natsume for a bi-monthly manga magazine as a story that could work with each episode as a stand alone. It's a memorable manga, the first my current editor and I worked together to create

I hope you enjoy it

MY TRUE FORM IS VERY GRACEFUL AND ELEGANT, YOU KNOW.
I'VE SPENT SUCH A LONG TIME IN THAT CERAMIC CAT THAT MY BODY'S GOTTEN USED TO IT.
OH YEAH?
I COULD BE YOUR BODYGUARD FOR A WHILE. YOU BETTER CALL ME "SENSEI."
I OWE YOU FOR BREAKING THE KEKKAI ANYWAY.
SO WHAT'S THIS BOOK?
WHAT-EVER.
...
IT HOLDS THE NAMES OF ALL THE YOKAI REIKO NATSUME BULLIED.

REIKO COULDN'T GET ALONG WITH HUMANS.

SO SHE STARTED TO PICK ON YOKAI.

POW

kick

SPLASH

SHE BULLIED THEM INTO DUELS AND CRUSHED THEM. SHE WAS BORN WITH SUBSTANTIAL MYSTICAL POWERS.

BAM

SHE MADE THEM PROMISE THAT THE WINNER WOULD GET POWER OVER THE LOSER, AND THEN HAD THEM WRITE THEIR NAMES DOWN TO ENSURE THEIR OBEDIENCE.

THIS BOOK IS THE COLLECTION OF THOSE NAMES.

SO... WHY DO **YOU** WANT IT, **NYANKO SENSEI?**

WHY DO YOU THINK?

THEY SAY WHEN THE OWNER OF THE BOOK CALLS A NAME AND ISSUES A COMMAND, HE CANNOT BE REFUSED.

IN OTHER WORDS, YOU CAN RULE OVER **MANY** YOKAI.

02

❀~Internal Monologues~

I don't really like using them (though I like reading them). Ones that paint a mental image make me especially nervous. That's not because of the difficulties in expression, but because once you can see clearly through a character's head, I can't draw him anymore. I lose my interest when I find out that's all there is. So I try to minimize monologues as much as I can to ones that explain the situation, or that show the closeness (or lack thereof) between two people, for example. Such monologues are fine for female characters, but I prefer that readers don't read every thought and emotion for a male character. It feels like there are fewer monologues the more I care about a character. Now, Natsume is a struggle in that respect. I kept thinking many times that I wouldn't have to suffer like this if only Natsume were a girl. But I wanted to do a story about a boy and his non-human teacher, so I guess it comes with the territory.

tmp

I'M SORRY, THE FUJIWARAS AREN'T HOME...

I KNEW IT.

BRR

YOU'VE COME BACK.

REIKO.

BLESH

AM

duck !!

WHAT THE...?

BOOK

IT BACK

GIVE

ZZG

REIKO

URK

EXCUSE ME.

tp tp tptp

BACK GIVE IT

tptptptptptptp

SHF
SHF
SHF
HE RAN OFF. GOOD GRIEF...
KTN
K
THEY'RE COMING AFTER ME.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
glom
NYANKO SENSEI!
You're heavy!
UMP
!!

Heh heh

WHAT SHOULD I DO..?

hff

SEE, YOU CAN'T HANDLE IT! GIVE IT TO ME.

THEN THEY'LL STOP COMING AFTER YOU.

hff

hff

hff

hff

hff

NO... I CAN'T.

WHY?! YOU WANT TO HAVE POWER OVER THE SUPER-NATURAL, HUMAN?

I WAS WILLING TO WAIT, BUT... HAND IT OVER!!

WHAT OTHER USE WOULD A HUMAN HAVE FOR IT?

OF COURSE NOT.

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT ...

DOOM

GIVE IT TO ME!!

NOW GIVE THE BOOK TO ME.

STOMP

UNH...

GACK!

YOU BETTER GIVE IT UP, OR I'LL CRUSH YOU.

...

...

NYAH!

YOU'RE SUCH A...

HUH!

NO! YOU'LL USE IT FOR THE WRONG REASONS!

OBVI-OUSLY! IT'S TOO MUCH FUN!

BON

STOP IT!

NOW...

.....

I CAN'T JUST HAND IT OFF TO SOME-ONE!

THIS IS ONE OF THE FEW THINGS LEFT BY MY GRAND-MOTHER.

NYANKO SENSEI ...

LISTEN.

WEEN

WEEN

SHE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO RELATE WELL TO OTHERS...

NOT MANY PEOPLE EVEN **REMEMBER** HER, SINCE SHE DIED SO YOUNG. NOT EVEN HER OWN DAUGHTER...

SO I AT LEAST WANT TO REMEMBER HER NAME AND TAKE CARE OF HER THINGS...

I WANT TO KEEP THAT CONNECTION ALIVE.

THIS IS PERSONAL TO ME.

.....

ARE YOU CRAZY?! WHAT A WASTE!! HOW MANY DO YOU THINK THERE ARE?!

THE NAMES.

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO GIVE THEM BACK?

Peek

I WANT TO AVOID AS MUCH TROUBLE AS I CAN.

WHAT?

I BETTER START GIVING THEM BACK.

I'LL BE FINE. I HAVE **YOU**, SENSEI.

IT'S EASY TO DO, BUT MANY YOKAI ARE VICIOUS. YOU WON'T LAST LONG.

*To advise against it

SAY WHAT?!

I DIDN'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED ...

BUT I KIND OF OWE IT TO THEM.

PLEASE, SENSEI. WILL YOU HELP ME OUT?

IF I END UP DYING PARTWAY THROUGH, THE **BOOK OF FRIENDS** WILL BE YOURS.

YEAH, I'M SURE...

I CAN HAVE THE BOOK WHEN YOUR LIFE ENDS?

ARE YOU SURE?

.....

FINE...

WHO

O

O

THANK YOU.

I'LL SEE THIS THROUGH TO THE END.

SNG

SNG

DO THIS ONE LATER.

TRY IT OUT WITH THE OTHER ONE.

YEAH.

HSSH

tp tp

SHHF SHHF

THERE HE IS!

flip flip flip

THIS IS IT!

flip flip

fup

YOU'RE HER DIRECT DESCENDANT, SO IT SHOULD WORK.

REIKO'S SALIVA AND BREATH ARE REQUIRED NEXT.

RIP

chomp

...FOCUS AND EXHALE.

HOLD THE PAPER IN YOUR MOUTH, CLAP YOUR HANDS...

CLAP

AH

KARI-KAGE.

I GIVE YOU BACK YOUR NAME.

TAKE IT AND BE FREE.

ﾐｼ

ﾐｼ

ﾐｼ

ﾐｼ

ﾐｼ

ﾐｼ

REIKO.

REI...

.....

.....

ｽｯ

ｽｯ

ｽｯ

ｽｯ

ｽｯ

ｽｯ

!

OKAY, NEXT UP...

YOU LOOK PALE.

HE'S GONE.

ONE DOWN.

THIS JUST MIGHT WORK.

YEAH...

HMM?

WHY DO YOU ASK?

DID YOU SEE SOME-THING?

OH...

AND TURN IT OVER TO ME.

Stick it here!

ENOUGH.

KNOCK IT OFF.

...

Can't hide it huh?

IT TIRED ME OUT MORE THAN I EXPECTED ...

OF COURSE! THIS ISN'T AN EASY UNDER-TAKING!!

JUST GIVE UP...

HOW ABOUT YOU?

IS YOUR NAME IN THE BOOK?

WHO KNOWS ?

CARE TO TRY ME?

.....

SHE

WHOA ...

HISSHSSHSSHS

BRR

REIKO

UNH ...

SHS

.....

WHAT ...?

YOU NEVER

HSSH

GIVE IT BACK.

SHSS

MY NAME.

HSS

FFF

FFF

SHH

LET HIM GO!!

EVERY TIME I BITE DOWN ON A NAME...

...IMAGES STREAM INTO MY HEAD.

UNH ...

WHOA!

SHA ING

I FEEL...

THE MEMO-RIES OF THE YOKAI?

OR MY GRAND-MOTHER'S THOUGHTS ...

I FEEL LONELY...

HUNGRY...

MM.

mf

mmp

TRUST ME, IT WASN'T VERY GOOD.

HEY!

My sweet bun!

UHOMP

YUMMY

...

TH-THAT'S NOT FOR HUMANS, YOU GLUTTON!

IF YOU WANT QUALITY SWEETS, I RECOMMEND NANATSUJI'S.

...

HMM, WHY DON'T WE HAVE A LITTLE DUEL? IF YOU WIN, I'LL GET YOU SOME. MY TREAT.

YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF ME...?

NO, YOU SEE...

sob sob

So mean

hee hee

I'M VERY POWERFUL.

YAH!

BONK

Eek!

OW!

bop bop

POW

YAH!

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR CHEEK?

SOME-ONE THREW A ROCK AT ME.

THEY SAID I CREEP THEM OUT.

NOW YOU'RE ONE OF MY MINIONS.

YOU HAVE A PRETTY NAME.

...

...I WANT YOU TO RUSH TO MY SIDE.

b bmp

WHEN I CALL YOUR NAME...

b.bmp

REIKO.

REIKO...

GIVE MY NAME BACK.

IF YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO CALL ME ANYWAY, NO MATTER HOW LONG I WAIT...

I FEEL LONELY.

SO LONELY.

THIS IS WORSE THAN BEFORE.

ANOTHER DAY WHEN YOU DIDN'T CALL MY NAME.

...I'D RATHER YOU DIDN'T HAVE IT AT ALL...

HISHI-GAKI.

MY GRAND-MOTHER ...

REIKO.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT NOW?

... PROBABLY NEVER FELT ALONE.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT BY YOUR-SELF?

THANK YOU, HISHIGAKI ...

F

A KIND-HEARTED FRIEND...

THANK YOU.

W

...TO MY GRAND-MOTHER...

A

A

DID YOU GET TO SEE REIKO? WASN'T SHE A HORRIBLE PERSON?

...FOR THE YOKAI TO COME FIND HER, TO GET THEIR NAMES BACK.

MAYBE ...

I BET SHE WAS WAITING...

AS MANY AS SHE COULD FIND.

I REFUSED TO DUEL, BUT SHE KEPT COMING FROM TIME TO TIME TO CHALLENGE ME.

MY NAME ISN'T IN THERE.

AND THE YOKAI FELT LONELY BEING NO MORE THAN ONE OF MANY...

I DIDN'T THINK SHE HAD ANYBODY TO CLAIM HER THINGS.

I WANTED TO TAKE THE **BOOK OF FRIENDS** UNDER MY CHARGE, BUT...

...

BUT ONE DAY SHE STOPPED COMING...

I'D FORGOTTEN HOW SHORT YOUR LIVES WERE...

I THOUGHT SHE'D GIVEN UP.

CAN YOU DO THIS, NATSUME ...?

SINCE THEN...

YES... I WANT TO.

I DON'T KNOW IF...

...MY DAYS HAVE BEEN FILLED ...

What a big head!

Oh!

Can I have a cat?

...WITH A BIT MORE CHAOS.

Yeah, thanks

Were you okay?

Reiko!

Whoa—!

MANY JUST HAVE A GRUDGE.

...I CAN COME TO LIKE THEM, BUT...

bees buzz

pit pat pit

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FOLLOW ME.

pit pat

BUT I THINK OF IT AS...

I TOLD YOU, I'LL SEE THIS THROUGH TO THE END.

WHO KNOWS WHEN YOU MIGHT DROP THE BOOK.

...PATHS CROSS-ING IN THE WEB OF LIFE.

...FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE...

OH!

I HEAR THEIR SWEET BUNS ARE TASTY. SEN-SEI.

WHAT ?!

I WANT ONE!!

ARE YOU SURE KITTIES ARE ALLOWED TO HAVE SWEETS?

I SAID, I'M NOT A KITTY!

NATSUME'S BOOK OF FRIENDS

Vol. 1

Shojo Beat Edition

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Translation & Adaptation Lillian Olsen
Touch-up Art & Lettering Sabrina Heep
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Natsume Yujincho by Yuki Midorikawa
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First published in Japan in 2005 by HAKUSENSHA, Inc., Tokyo.
English language translation rights arranged with HAKUSENSHA, Inc., Tokyo.

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Published by VIZ Media, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

VIZ media
www.viz.com

RATED T FOR TEEN
PARENTAL ADVISORY
NATSUME'S BOOK OF FRIENDS is rated T for Teen and is recommended for ages 16 and up.
This volume contains fantasy violence.
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